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BLUE SHIELD OF CALIFORNIA FOUNDATION USHERS IN NEW WAVE OF CLINIC LEADERS

Inaugural graduates of Clinic Leadership Institute applauded as 'heroes of health care'

San Francisco, June 17, 2009 – California's healthcare safety net reaches an important milestone this week as nearly two dozen leaders from community health clinics graduate from the first-ever class of Clinic Leadership Institute. This innovative program was created by Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF) to engage and prepare emerging leaders of California's community clinics and health centers to be effective and passionate agents of change in today's rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

California's 800 community clinics provide medical care to over four million people annually, the majority of whom are living below the federal poverty level. Record numbers of Californians have been turning to clinics for help as the economy leaves more and more people out of work and without health insurance.

"Clinic leaders are the heroes of our healthcare system, and nowhere is that better reflected than this inaugural graduating class of the Clinic Leadership Institute," said Crystal Hayling, president and CEO of BSCF. "California's safety net is undoubtedly stronger because this new wave of clinic leaders now has new tools and knowledge to deliver quality care to the people who need it most in a rapidly changing environment."

For the last 18 months, participants in the Institute have attended intensive sessions that included finance management, strategy development, and health policy, applying their new skills to special projects in their clinics. The program is administered by the Center for the Health Professions at the University of California, San Francisco, and was designed with input from community clinic representatives, as well as regional and national experts in the field of leadership development.

Even though the official graduation will take place this Saturday, June 20, participants have already begun to make a difference by applying what they have learned.

- In **Thousand Oaks**, Teresa Seeley doubled the amount of time that medical personnel are available to help patients at Conejo Free Clinic by recruiting more volunteer doctors and nurses.

- In **Berkeley**, Brenda Shipp has made the Lifelong Medical Clinic more efficient and effective by revamping the hiring and orientation process and creating a new training program for support staff.
- In **San Diego**, Teresa Simms brought in needed healthcare resources at St. Vincent de Paul Village by initiating and completing the process of qualifying the homeless clinic for federal stimulus funds.
- In **Shasta County**, Inder Wadhwa overcame a challenge facing rural patients with chronic diabetes by setting up a process that would allow doctors at UC Davis to look at pictures of their eyes and diagnose problems early on. Thanks to this program, annual eye exams for his patients leapt from 48 to 82 percent.

The Clinic Leadership Institute, a signature project of BSCF, is an outgrowth of the Foundation's longstanding commitment to supporting California's healthcare safety net. Since 2003, BSCF has invested nearly \$32 million in approximately 200 health clinics and their associations across California.

BSCF's Clinic Leadership Class of 2009:

Greater Humboldt Area

Stacy Watkins, Open Door Community Health Centers, Arcata

Greater Mendocino Area

Michael Mabanglo, MSW, PhD, Mendocino Community Health Clinic, Inc., Ukiah
Lucresha Renteria, Mendocino Coast Clinics, Inc., Fort Bragg

Greater Merced Area

Ginger Smith, Golden Valley Health Centers, Merced

Greater Chico Area

Inder Wadhwa, MBA, Northern Valley Indian Health, Chico

Greater Sacramento Area

Theresa Anaya, Del Norte Clinics, Inc., Yuba City
Rosario Arreola Pro, California Rural Indian Health Board, Woodland
Lynnette Worden, Center Manager Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Roseville

Greater Santa Cruz Area

Amy Peeler, MPH, Santa Cruz Women's Health Center, Santa Cruz

Greater Santa Rosa Area

Stacey McCall, Community Health Clinic Ole, Napa
Claudia Urbina, Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, Sonoma

Los Angeles Area

Ana Zeledon Friendly, MPH, Venice Family Clinic, Venice
Teresa Seeley, Conejo Free Clinic, Thousand Oaks

Precious Stallworth, Los Angeles Gay& Lesbian Center, Los Angeles
Nina Vaccaro, MPH, South Central Family Health Center, Los Angeles

San Diego Area

Lourdes Acevedo, MHA, Vista Community Clinic, Vista
Elvira Ogletree, North County Health Services, Oceanside
Teresa Simms, MPH, St. Vincent de Paul Village, San Diego
Veronica Yap, Neighborhood Healthcare, Escondido

San Francisco Bay Area

Anna Dorman, MPH, La Clinica de La Raza, Oakland
Carlina Hansen, Women's Community Clinic, San Francisco
Belinda Hernandez, MSW, Ravenswood Family Health Center, East Palo Alto
Natalie Hodgen, Gardner Family Health Network, San Jose
Jen Lee, MPH, Asian Health Services, Oakland
Brenda Shipp, LifeLong Medical Care, Berkeley

About Blue Shield of California Foundation

Blue Shield of California Foundation is one of the largest healthcare grantmaking organizations in California. For more information, visit: www.blueshieldcafoundation.org. The Foundation was formed by Blue Shield of California, a not-for-profit corporation with more than 3.4 million members, 4,700 employees and 20 offices throughout California. For more information about the company, please visit www.blueshieldca.com.

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